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THE

LIFE

OF

WILLIAM COBBETT,

BY HIMSELF.

INTENDED AS AN ENCOURAGING EXAMPLE

TO

ALL YOUNG MEN OF HUMBLE FORTUNE;

BEING A PROOF OF WHAT CAN BE EFFECTED

BY STEADY APPLICATION AND HONEST EFFORTS.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY E. M'MILLAN, BOW STREET, COVENT GARDEN;

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1809.

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THE

LIFE

OF

WILLIAM COBBETT.

TO be descended from an illustrious family certainly reflects honour on any man, in spite of the sans-culottes principles of the present day. This is, however, an honour that I have no pretension to. All that I can boast of in my birth, is, that I was born in Old England; the country from whence came the men who explored and settled North America; the country of Penn, and of all those to whom this country is indebted.

With respect to my ancestors, I shall go no farther back than my grandfather, and for this plain reason, that I never heard talk of any prior to him. He was a day-labourer; and I have heard my father say;

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that he worked for one farmer from the day of his marriage to that of his death, upwards of forty years. He died before I was born, but I have often slept beneath the same roof that had sheltered him; and where his widow dwelt for several years after his death. It was a little thatched cottage, with a garden before the door. It had but two windows; a damson tree shaded one, and a clump of filberts the other. Here I and my brothers went every Christmas and Whitsuntide to spend a week or two, and torment the poor old woman with our noise and dilapidations. She used to give us milk and bread for breakfast, an apple-pudding for our dinner, and a piece of bread and cheese for supper. Her fire was made of turf, cut from the neighbouring heath, and her evening light was a rush dipped in grease.

How much better is it, thus to tell the naked truth, than to descend to such miserable shifts as Doctor Franklin has had recourse to, in order to persuade people that his forefathers were men of wealth and consideration. Not being able to refer his readers to the herald's office for proofs of

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the fame and antiquity of his family, he appeals to the etymology of his name, and points out a passage in an obsolete book, whence he has the conscience to insist on our concluding, that, in the old English language, a *Franklin* meant a man of *good reputation, and of consequence.* According to Dr. Johnson, a Franklin was what we now call a gentleman's steward or land-bailiff, a personage one degree above a bum-bailiff, and that's all.

Every one will, I hope, have the goodness to believe that my grandfather was no philosopher. Indeed he was not. He never made a lightning rod, nor bottled up a single quart of sun-shine in the whole course of his life. He was no almanack-maker, nor quack, nor chimney-doctor, nor soap-boiler, nor ambassador, nor printer's devil: neither was he a deist, and all his children were born in wedlock. The legacies he left, were, his scythe, his reap-hook, and his flail; he bequeathed no old and irrecoverable debts to an hospital: he never *cheated the poor during his life, nor mocked them in his death.* He has, it is true, been suffered to sleep quietly beneath the

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green sward; but, if his descendants cannot point to his statue over the door of a library, they have not the mortification to hear him daily accused of having been a whoremaster, a hypocrite, and an infidel.

My father, when I was born, was a farmer. The reader will easily believe, from the poverty of his parents, that he had received no very brilliant education; he was, however, learned for a man in his rank of life. When a little boy, he drove plough for twopence a day; and these his earnings, were appropriated to the expences of an evening school. What a village schoolmaster could be expected to teach, he had learnt; and had, besides, considerably improved himself in several branches of the mathematics; he understood land surveying well, and was often chosen to draw the plans of disputed territory: in short, he had the reputation of possessing experience and understanding, which never fails in England, to give a man in a country place, some little weight with his neighbours. He was honest, industrious, and frugal; it was not therefore wonderful, that he should be situated in a good

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farm, and happy in a wife of his own rank, like him, beloved and respected.

So much for my ancestors, from whom, if I derive no honour, I derive no shame.

I had (and I hope I yet have) three brothers; the eldest is a shop-keeper; the second a farmer, and the youngest, if alive, is in the service of the Honourable East India Company, a private soldier, perhaps, as I have been in the service of the King. I was born on the ninth of March, 1766: the exact age of my brothers I have forgotten: but I remember having heard my mother say, that there was but three years and three quarters difference between the age of the oldest and that of the youngest.

A father like ours, it will be readily supposed, did not suffer us to eat the bread of idleness. I do not remember the time when I did not earn my living. My first occupation was, driving the small birds from the turnip seed, and the rooks from the pease. When I first trudged a field, with my wooden bottle and my satchel swung over my shoulders, I was hardly able to climb the gates and stiles; and at the close of the day, to reach home, was a

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task of infinite difficulty. My next employment was weeding wheat, and leading a single horse at harrowing barley. Hoeing pease followed, and hence I arrived at the honour of joining the reapers in harvest, driving the team, and holding plough. We were all of us strong and laborious, and my father used to boast, that he had four boys, the eldest of whom was but fifteen years old, who did as much work as any three men in the parish of Farnham. Honest pride and happy days!

I have some faint recollection of going to school to an old woman, who, I believe did not succeed in learning me my letters. In the winter evenings my father learnt us all to read and write, and gave us a pretty tolerable knowledge of arithmetic. Grammar he did not perfectly understand himself, and therefore his endeavours to learn us that necessarily failed: for though he thought he understood it, and though he made us get the rules by heart, we learnt nothing at all of the principles.

Our religion was that of the Church of England, to which I have ever remained attached; the more so, perhaps, as it bears

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the name of my country. As my ancestors were never persecuted for their religious opinions, they never had an opportunity of giving such a singular proof of their faith as Dr. Franklin's grandfather did, when he kept his bible under the lid of a close-stool. (What a book-case!) If I had been in the place of Doctor Franklin, I never would have related this ridiculous circumstance, especially as it must be construed into a boast of his grandfather's having an extraordinary degree of veneration for a book, which, it is well known, he himself *durst* no believe in.

As to politics, we were like the rest of the country people in England; that is to say, we neither knew or thought any thing about the matter. The shouts of victory, or the murmurs at a defeat, would now and then break in upon our tranquillity for a moment: but I do not remember ever having seen a newspaper in the house; and, most certainly, that privation did not renders us less industrious, happy, or free.

After, however, the American war had continued for some time, and the cause and nature of it began to be understood, or

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rather misunderstood, by the lower classes of the people in England, we became a little better acquainted with subjects of this kind. It is well known, that the people were, as to numbers, nearly equally divided in their opinions concerning that war, and their wishes respecting the result of it. My father was a partizan of the Americans: he used frequently to dispute on the subject, with the gardener of a nobleman who lived near us. This was generally done with good humour over a pot of our best ale; yet the disputants sometimes grew warm, and gave way to language that could not fail to attract our attention. My father was worsted without doubt, as he had for antagonist, a shrewd and sensible old Scotchman, far his superior in political knowledge; but he pleaded before a partial audience: we thought there was but one wise man in the world, and that that one was our father. He who pleaded the cause of the Americans had an advantage, too, with young minds: he had only to represent the king's troops as sent to cut the throats of a people, our friends and relations, merely because they would not sub-

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mit to oppression; and his cause was gained. Speaking to the passions, is ever sure to succeed on the uninformed.

Men of integrity are generally pretty obstinate, in adhering to an opinion once adopted. Whether it was owing to this, or to the weakness of Mr. Martin's arguments, I will not pretend to say; but he never could make a convert of my father: he continued an American, and so staunch a one, that he would not have suffered his best friend to drink success to the King's arms at his table. I cannot give the reader a better idea of his obstinacy in this respect, and of the length to which this difference in sentiment was carried in England, than by relating the following instance.

My father used to take one of us with him every year, to the great hop-fair at Wey-hill. The fair was held at Old Michaelmas-tide, and the journey was, to us, a sort of reward for the labours of the summer. It happened to be my turn to go thither, the very year that Long Island was taken by the British. A great company of hop-merchants and farmers were just sitting down to supper as the post

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arrived, bringing in the Extraordinary Gazette, which announced the victory. A hop-factor from London took the paper, placed his chair upon the table, and began to read with an audible voice. He was opposed, a dispute ensued, and my father retired, taking me by the hand, to another apartment, where we supped with about a dozen others of the same sentiments. Here Washington's health, and success to the Americans, were repeatedly toasted, and this was the first time, as far as I can recollect, that I ever heard the General's name mentioned. Little did I then dream, that I should ever see the man, and still less, that I should hear some of his own countrymen reviling and execrating him.

Let not the reader imagine, that I wish to assume any merit from this mistaken prejudice of an honoured and beloved parent. Whether he was right or wrong, is not now worth talking about: that I had no opinion of my own is certain; for, had my father been on the other side, I should have been on the other side too; and should have looked upon the company I then made a part of, as malcontents and

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rebels. I mention these circumstances, merely to show that I was not "nursed in the lap of aristocracy," and that I did not imbibe my principles, or prejudices, from those who were the advocates of blind submission. If my father had any fault, it was not being submissive enough, and I am much afraid, my acquaintance have but too often discovered the same fault in his son.

It would be as useless as unentertaining, to dwell on the occupations and sports of a country boy; to lead the reader to fairs, cricket-matches, and hare-hunts. I shall therefore come at once to the epoch, when an accident happened, that gave that turn to my future life, which at last brought me to the United States.

Towards the autumn of 1782, I went to visit a relation who lived in the neighbourhood of Portsmouth. From the top of Portsdown, I, for the first time, beheld the sea, and no sooner did I behold it, than I wished to be a sailor. I could never account for this sudden impulse, nor can I now. Almost all English boys feel the same inclination: it would seem that, like

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young ducks, instinct leads them to rush on the bosom of the water.

But it was not the sea alone that I saw: the grand fleet was riding at anchor at Spithead. I had heard of the Wooden Walls of Old England: I had formed my ideas of a ship, and of a fleet; but, what I now beheld, so far surpassed what I had ever been able to form a conception of, that I stood lost between astonishment and admiration. I had heard talk of the glorious deeds of our Admirals and Sailors, of the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and of all those memorable combats, that good and true Englishmen never fail to relate to their children about a hundred times a year. The brave Rodney's victories over our natural enemies, the French and Spaniards, had long been the theme of our praise, and the burden of our songs. The sight of the fleet brought all these into my mind; in confused order, it is true, but with irresistible force. My heart was inflated with national pride. The sailors were my countrymen; the fleet belonged to my country, and surely I had my part in it, and in all its honours: yet, these

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honours I had not earned; I took to myself a sort of reproach, for possessing what I had no right to, and resolved to have a just claim, by sharing in the hardships and dangers.

I arrived at my uncle's late in the evening, with my mind full of my seafaring project. Though I had walked thirty miles during the day, and consequently was well wearied, I slept not a moment. It was no sooner day-light, than I arose, and walked down towards the old castle, on the beach of Spithead. For a sixpence given to an invalid, I got permission to go upon the battlements: here I had a closer view of the fleet, and at every look my impatience to be on board increased. In short, I went from the castle to Portsmouth, got into a boat, and was in a few minutes on board the Pegasus man of war.

The Captain had more compassion than is generally met with in men of his profession: he represented to me the toils I must undergo, and the punishment that the least disobedience or neglect would subject me to. He persuaded me to return home, and I remember he concluded his advice,

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with telling me, that it was better to be led to church in a halter, to be tied to a girl that I did not like, than to be tyed to the gangway, or, as the sailors call it, married to *Miss Roper*. From the conclusion of this wholesome counsel, I perceived that the Captain thought I had eloped on account of a bastard. I blushed, and that confirmed him in his opinion; but I declare to the reader, that I was no more guilty of such an offence than Mr. Swanwick, or any other gentleman who is constitutionally virtuous. No; thank Heaven, I have none of the Franklintonian crimes to accuse myself of; my children do not hang their hats up in other men's houses; I am neither patriot nor philosopher.

I in vain attempted to convince Captain Berkley, that choice alone had led me to the sea; he sent me on shore, and I at last quitted Portsmouth; but not before I had applied to the Port Admiral, Evans, to get my name enrolled among those who were destined for the service. I was, in some sort, obliged to acquaint the Admiral with what had passed on board the Pegasus, in consequence of which, my request was re-

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fused, and I happily escaped, sorely against my will, from the most toilsome and perilous profession in the world.

I returned once more to the plough, but I was spoiled for a farmer. I had, before my Portsmouth adventure, never known any other ambition than that of surpassing my brothers in the different labours of the field: but it was quite otherwise now; I sighed for a sight of the world; the little Island of Britain seemed too small a compass for me. The things in which I had taken the most delight were neglected; the singing of the birds grew insipid, and even the heart-cheering cry of the hounds, after which I formerly used to fly from my work, bound o'er the fields, and dash through the brakes and coppices, was heard with the most torpid indifference. Still, however, I remained at home till the following spring, when I quitted it, perhaps for ever.

It was on the 6th of May, 1783, that I, like Don Quixote, sallied forth to seek adventures. I was dressed in my holiday clothes, in order to accompany two or three lasses to Guildford fair. They were

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to assemble at a house about three miles from my home, where I was to attend them; but, unfortunately for me, I had to cross the London turnpike road. The stage-coach had just turned the summit of a hill, and was rattling down towards me at a merry rate. The notion of going to London never entered my mind till this very moment, yet the step was completely determined on before the coach came to the spot where I stood. Up I got, and was in London about nine o'clock in the evening.

It was by mere accident that I had money enough to defray the expences of this day. Being rigged out for the fair, I had three or four crown and half crown pieces (which most certainly I did not intend to spend), besides a few shillings and half-pence. This, my little all, which I had been years in amassing, melted away, like snow before the sun, when touched by the fingers of the innkeepers and their waiters. In short, when I arrived at Ludgate-hill, and had paid my fare, I had but about half-a-crown in my pocket.

By a commencement of that good luck,

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which has hitherto attended me, through all the situations in which fortune has placed me, I was preserved from ruin. A gentleman, who was one of the passengers in the stage, fell into conversation with me at dinner, and he soon learnt that I was going, I knew not whither, nor for what. This gentleman was a hop-merchant in the Borough of Southwark, and, upon closer inquiry, it appeared that he had often dealt with my father at Weyhill. He knew the danger I was in; he was himself a father, and he felt for my parents. His house became my home; he wrote to my father, and endeavoured to prevail on me to obey his orders, which were to return immediately home. I am ashamed to say that I was disobedient. It was the first time I had ever been so, and I have repented of it from that moment to this. Willingly would I have returned; but pride would not suffer me to do it. I feared the scoffs of my acquaintances more than the real evils that threatened me.

My generous preserver finding my obstinacy not to be overcome, began to look out for an employment for me. He was

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preparing an advertisement for the newspaper, when an acquaintance of his, an attorney, called in to see him. He related my adventure to this gentleman, whose name was Holland, and who, happening to want an understrapping quill-driver, did me the honour to take me into his service; and the next day saw me perched upon a great high stool, in an obscure chamber in Gray's Inn, endeavouring to decypher the crabbed draughts of my employer.

I could write a good plain hand, but I could not read the pot-hooks and hangers of Mr. Holland. He was a month in learning me to copy without almost continual assistance, and even then I was of but little use to him; for, besides that I wrote a snail's pace, my want of knowledge in orthography gave him infinite trouble; so that for the first two months I was a dead weight upon his hands. Time, however, rendered me useful; and Mr. Holland was pleased to tell me, that he was very well satisfied with me, just at the very moment when I began to grow extremely dissatisfied with him.

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No part of my life has been totally unattended with pleasure, except the eight or nine months I passed in Gray's Inn. The office (for so the dungeon where I wrote was called) was so dark, that on cloudy days we were obliged to burn candle. I worked like a galley-slave from five in the morning till eight or nine at night, and sometimes all night long. How many quarrels have I assisted to foment and perpetuate between those poor innocent fellows, John Doe and Richard Roe! How many times (God forgive me!) have I set them to assault each other with guns, swords, staves, and pitchforks, and then brought them to answer for their misdeeds before our Sovereign Lord the King, seated in his Court of Westminster! When I think of the *saids* and *soforths*, and the counts of tautology that I scribbled over; when I think of those sheets of seventy-two words, and those lines two inches apart, my brain turns. Gracious heaven! if I am doomed to be wretched, bury me beneath Iceland snows, and let me feed on blubber; stretch me under the burning line, and deny me thy propitious dews; nay, if it be thy will, suffocate me with the infected and pestilen-

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tial air of a democratic club-room: but save me from tht desk of an attorney!

Mr. Holland was but little in the chambers himself. He always went out to dinner, while I was left to be provided for by the *laundress*, as he called her. Those gentlemen of the law, who have resided in the Inns of Court in London, know very well what a *laundress* means. Ours was, I believe, the oldest and ugliest of the sisterhood. She had age and experience enough to be Lady Abbess of all the nuns in all the convents in Irish-town. It would be wronging the Witch of Endor, to compare her to this hag, who was the only creature that deigned to enter into conversation with me. All except the name, I was in prison, and this weird sister was my keeper. Our chambers were, to me, what the subterraneous cavern was to Gil Blas; his description of the Dame Leonarda exactly suited my laundress; nor were the professions, or rather the practice, of our masters altogether dissimilar.

I never quitted this gloomy recess, except on Sundays, when I usually took a walk to St. James's Park, to feast my eyes with the

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sight of the trees, the grass, and the water. In one of these walks, I happened to cast my eye on an advertisement, inviting all loyal young men, who had a mind to gain riches and glory, to repair to a certain rendezvous, where they might enter into His Majesty's marine service, and have the peculiar happiness and honour of being enrolled in the Chatham Division. I was not ignorant enough to be the dupe of this morsel of military bombast; but a change was what I wanted: besides, I knew that marines went to sea, and my desire to be on that element had rather increased than diminished by my being penned up in London. In short, I resolved to join this glorious corps; and to avoid all possibility of being discovered by my friends, I went down to Chatham, and enlisted into the marines, as I thought, but the next morning I found myself before a Captain of a marching regiment. There was no retreating; I had taken a shilling to drink His Majesty's health, and his further bounty was ready for my reception.

When I told the Captain (who was an Irishman, and who has since been an ex-

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cellent friend to me), that I thought myself engaged in the marines: "By Jesus! my lad," said he, "and you have had a narrow escape." He told me, that the regiment into which I had been so happy as to enlist, was one of the oldest and boldest in the whole army, and that it was at that moment serving in that fine, flourishing, and plentiful country, Nova Scotia. He dwelt long on the beauties and riches of this terrestrial paradise, and dismissed me, perfectly enchanted with the prospect of a voyage thither.

I enlisted early in 1784, and, as peace had then taken place, no great haste was made to send recruits off to their regiments. I remained upwards of a year at Chatham, during which time I was employed in learning my exercise, and taking my tour in the duty of the garrison. My leisure time, which was a very considerable portion of the twenty-four hours, was spent, not in the dissipations common to such a way of life, but in reading and study. In the course of this year I learnt much more than I had ever done before.

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I subscribed to a circulating library at Brompton, the greatest part of the books in which I read more than once over. The library was not very considerable, it is true, nor in my reading was I directed by any degree of taste or choice. Novels, plays, history, poetry, all were read, and nearly with equal avidity.

Such a course of reading could be attended with but little profit: it was skimming over the surface of every thing. One branch of learning, however, I went to the bottom with, and that the most essential branch too, the grammar of my mother tongue. I had experienced the want of a knowledge of grammar during my stay with Mr. Holland; but it is very probable that I never should have thought of encountering the study of it, had not accident placed me under a man whose friendship extended beyond his interest. Writing a fair hand procured me the honour of being copyist to Colonel Debeig, the commandant of the garrison. I transcribed the famous correspondence between him and the Duke of Richmond, which ended in

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the good and gallant old Colonel being stripped of the reward bestowed on him for his long and meritorious servitude.

Being totally ignorant of the rules of grammar, I necessarily made many mistakes in copying, because no one can copy letter by letter, nor even word by word. The Colonel saw my deficiency, and strongly recommended study. He enforced his advice with a sort of injunction, and with a promise of reward in case of success.

I procured me a Lowth's grammar, and applied myself to the study of it with unceasing assiduity, and not without some profit; for though it was a considerable time before I fully comprehended all that I read, still I read and studied with such unremitted attention, that, at last, I could write without falling into any very gross errors. The pains I took cannot be described: I wrote the whole grammar out two or three times; I got it by heart; I repeated it every morning and every evening; and when on guard, I imposed on myself the task of saying it all over once every time I was posted sentinel. To this exercise of my memory I ascribe the retentive-

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ness of which I have since found it capable, and to the success with which it was attended, I ascribe the perseverance that has led to the acquirement of the little learning of which I am master.

This study was, too, attended with another advantage: it kept me out of mischief. I was always sober, and regular in my attendance; and not being a clumsy fellow, I met with none of those reproofs, which disgust so many young men with the service.

There is no situation where merit is so sure to meet with reward as in a well-disciplined army. Those who command are obliged to reward it for their own ease and credit. I was soon raised to the rank of corporal; a rank, which, however contemptible it may appear in some people's eyes, brought me in a clear twopence *per diem*, and put a very clever worsted knot upon my shoulder too. Don't you laugh now, Mr. Swanwick; a worsted knot is a much more honourable mark of distinction than a *custom-house badge*; though, I confess, the King must have such people as tide-waiters as well as corporals.

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As promotion began to dawn, I grew impatient to get to my regiment, where I expected soon to bask under the rays of royal favour. The happy day of departure at last came; we set sail from Gravesend, and, after a short and pleasant passage, arrived at Halifax in Nova Scotia. When I first beheld the barren, not to say hideous, rocks at the entrance of the harbour, I began to fear that the master of the vessel had mistaken his way; for I could perceive nothing of that fertility that my good recruiting Captain had dwelt on with so much delight.

Nova Scotia had no other charm for me than that of novelty. Every thing I saw was new: bogs, rocks, and stumps, musquitoes and bull-frogs: thousands of captains and colonels without soldiers, and of 'squires without stockings or shoes. In England, I had never thought of approaching a 'squire without a most respectful bow; but in this new world, though I was but a corporal, I often ordered a 'squire to bring me a glass of grog, and even to take care of my knapsack.

We staid but a few weeks in Nova Sco-

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tia, being ordered to St. John's, in the province of New Brunswick. Here, and at other places in the same province, we remained till the month of September 1791; when the regiment was relieved and sent home.

We landed at Portsmouth on the 3d of November, and on the 19th of the next month I obtained my discharge, after having served not quite eight years, and after having, in that short space, passed through every rank, from that of private to that of Serjeant-Major, without being disgraced, confined, or even reprimanded.

At length, after having served eight years in the Army, during seven of which I was a non-commissioned officer, I obtained my discharge, and what the nature of that discharge was, will appear from the following testimonial:

"By the Right Hon. Lord Edward Fitzgerald, commanding the 54th Regiment, of which Lieutenant-General Frederick is Colonel—

"These are to certify, that the bearer hereof, William Cobbett, Serjeant-Major in the aforesaid regiment, has served honestly and faithfully for the space of eight years, nearly seven of which he has been a non-com-

missioned officer, and of that time he has been five years Serjeant-Major to the regiment; but having very earnestly applied for his discharge, he, in consideration of his good behaviour, and the services he has rendered the regiment, is hereby discharged. Given under my hand and the seal of the regiment, at Portsmouth, this 19th day of December, 1791.

"EDWARD FITZGERALD."

I shall here add the orders issued in the Garrison of Portsmouth on the day of my discharge.

"*Portsmouth, 19th Dec.* 1791.

"Serjeant-Major Cobbett having most pressingly applied for his discharge, at Major Lord Edward Fitzgerald's request, General Frederick has granted it. General Frederick has ordered Major Lord Edward Fitzgerald to return the Serjeant-Major thanks for his behaviour and conduct during the time of his being in the regiment, and Major Lord Edward adds his most hearty thanks to those of the General."

After having laid these two pieces before my reader, I beg him to recollect what has been stated of me in several quarters. The American papers most flagitiously asserted, that I was flogged in my regiment for thieving, and afterwards deserting. Such are the falsehoods to which my opponents

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have had recourse: I hope, therefore, that it will hence appear, that there could be no reasonable objection to my character down to the date of my dismissal, and if so, it only remains for me to give an account of myself from that time to this.

The same infamous faction have asserted, that I got my living in London by garret-scribbling; and that I was obliged to take a French leave for France, for some night work. Now the fact is, I went to France in March 1792, and I landed at New York in the month of October following, so that I had but three months to follow "garret-scribbling" in London. How these three months were employed, it is not here necessary to say; but that I had not much leisure for garret-scribbling, the ladies will be convinced, when I tell them that I got a wife in the time.

Before I go any further, it seems necessary to say a word or two about "French leave." Did this expression escape the democrats in an unwary moment?—"French leave!"—Did they wish to insinuate, that nobody but Frenchmen fly from the hands of thief-catchers? The Germans, and

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after them the English, have applied this degrading expression to the French nation; but is it not inconsistent, and even ungrateful, for those who are in the interest, and, perhaps, in the pay of that magnanimous republic, to talk about "French leave?" It is something curious that this expression should find a place in a paragraph wherein I am accused of abusing the French. The fact is, the friendship professed by these people towards the French nation, is all grimace, all hypocrisy: the moment they are off their guard, they let us see that it is the abominable system of French tyranny that they are attached to, and not to the people of that country.—"French leave!" The leave of a *runaway*, a *thief*, a *Tom Paine!* What could the most prejudiced, the bitterest Englishman have said more galling and severe against the whole French nation? They cry out against me for "*abusing*" the cut-throats of Nantz and other places, and for accusing the demagogue-tyrants of robbery; while they themselves treat the whole nation as thieves. This is the democratic way of washing out stains;

just as the sweet and cleanly Sheelah washes her gentle Dermot's face with a dishclout.

Leaving the ingenious citizens to extricate themselves from this hobble, or fall under the displeasure of their masters, I shall return to my adventures. I arrived in France in March 1792, and continued there till the beginning of September following, the six happiest months of my life. I should be the most ungrateful monster that ever existed, were I to speak ill of the French people in general. I went to that country full of all those prejudices that Englishmen suck in with their mother's milk, against the French and against their religion: a few weeks convinced me that I had been deceived with respect to both. I met every where with civility, and even hospitality, in a degree that I never had been accustomed to. I found the people among whom I lived, excepting those who were already blasted with the principles of the accursed revolution, honest, pious, and kind to excess.

People may say what they please about the misery of the French peasantry, under

the old government: I have conversed with thousands of them, not one among whom did not regret the change. I have not room here to go into an inquiry into the causes that have led these people to become the passive instruments, the slaves of a set of tyrants such as the world never saw before; but I venture to predict, that, sooner or later, they will return to that form of government under which they were happy, and under which alone they can ever be so again.

My determination to settle in the United States was formed before I went to France, and even before I quitted the Army. A desire of seeing a country, so long the theatre of a war of which I had heard and read so much; the flattering picture given of it by Raynal; and, above all, an inclination for seeing the world, led me to this determination. It would look a little like coaxing for me to say, that I had imbibed principles of republicanism, and that I was ambitious to become a citizen of a free state; but this was really the case; I thought that men enjoyed here a greater degree

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of liberty than in England; and this, if not the principal reason, was at least one, for my coming to this country.

I did intend to stay in France till the spring of 1793, as well to perfect myself in the language, as to pass the winter at Paris; but I perceived the storm gathering; I saw that a war with England was inevitable, and it was not difficult to foresee what would be the fate of Englishmen in that country, where the rulers had laid aside even the appearance of justice and mercy. I wished, however, to see Paris, and had actually hired a coach to go thither. I was even on the way, when I heard at Abbeville, that the King was dethroned and his guards murdered. This intelligence made me turn off towards Havre-de-Grace, whence I embarked for America.

I beg leave here to remind the reader, that one of the lying paragraphs lately published in the lying *Aurora*, states, that I was whipped at Paris, and that hence I bear a grudge against the French republic. Now, I never was at Paris, as I can prove by the receipts for my board and lodging,

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from the day I entered France to that of my leaving it; and, as to the republic, as it is called, I could have no grudge against it: for the tyrants had not given it that name, when I was so happy as to bid it an eternal adieu. Had I remained a few months longer, I make no doubt that I should have had to execrate it as every other man, woman, and child has, who has had the misfortune to groan under its iron anarchy.

Some little time after my arrival in this country, I sent Mr. Jefferson, then Secretary of State, a letter of recommendation, which I had brought from the American Ambassador at the Hague. The following is a copy of the letter Mr. Jefferson wrote me on that occasion.

"*Philadelphia, Nov. 5th, 1792.*

"SIR,

"In acknowledging the receipt of your favour of the 2d instant, I wish it were in my power to announce to you any way in which I could be useful to you. Mr. Short's assurances of your merit would be a sufficient inducement to me. Public Offices in our government are so few, and of so little value, as to offer no resource to talents. When you shall have been here some small time, you will be able to judge in what way you can set

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out with the best prospect of success, and if I can serve you in it, I shall be very ready to do it.

"I am, Sir,

"Your very humble servant,

"TH. JEFFERSON."

I will just observe on this letter, that it was thankfully received, and that, had I stood in need of Mr. Jefferson's services I should have applied to him; but as that did not appear likely to be the case, I wrote him a letter some few months afterwards, requesting him to assist a poor man, the bearer of it, and telling him that I should look upon the assistance as given to myself. I dare say he complied with my request, for the person recommended was in deep distress, and a *Frenchman*.

With respect to the authenticity of this letter there can be no doubt. I have shown the original, as well as those of the other documents here transcribed, to more than fifty gentlemen of the city of Philadelphia, and they may, at any time, be seen, by any person of credit, who wishes a sight of them. Nor have I confined the perusal of them to those who have the misfortune to be deemed aristocrats. Among persons of

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distant places I have shewn them to Mr. *Ketletas* of New York, who, I must do him the justice to say, had the candour to express a becoming detestation of the base cut-throat author of the threatening letter sent to Mr. Oldden.

I have now brought myself to the United States, and have enabled the reader to judge of me so far. It remains for me to negative two assertions, which apply to my authoring transactions; the one is, that "Mr. Bradford *put a coat upon my back*;" and the other, that I am, or have been, "in the pay of a British Agent."

In the month of July, 1794, the famous Unitarian Doctor, fellow of the *Royal* Society, London, *citizen* of France, and delegate to the *Grande Convention Nationale* of notorious memory, landed at New-York. His landing was nothing to me, nor to any body else; but the fulsome and consequential addresses sent him by the pretended patriots, and his canting replies, at once calculated to flatter the people here, and to degrade his country and mine, was something to me. It was my business, and the business of every man, who thinks that

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truth ought to be opposed to malice and hypocrisy.

When the *Observations* on the emigration of this "martyr to the cause of liberty," were ready for the press, I did not, at first, offer them to Mr. Bradford. I knew him to retain a rooted hatred against Great Britain, and concluded that his principles would prevent him from being instrumental in the publication of any thing that tended to unveil one of its most bitter enemies. I therefore addressed myself to Mr. Carey. This was, to make use of a culinary figure, jumping out of the frying-pan into the fire. Mr. Carey received me as booksellers generally receive authors (I mean authors whom they hope to get but little by): he looked at the title from top to bottom, and then at me from head to foot.—"o, *my lad*," says he, "I don't think it will suit."—*My lad!*—God in heaven forgive me! I believe that at that moment I wished for another yellow fever to strike the city; not to destroy the inhabitants, but to furnish me too, with *the subject of a pamphlet*, that might make me

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rich. Mr. Carey has sold hundreds of the *Observations* since that time, and therefore, I dare say he highly approved of them when he came to a perusal. At any rate, I must not forget to say, that he behaved honourably in the business; for he promised not to make known the author, and he certainly kept his word, or the discovery would not have been reserved for the month of June, 1796. This circumstance, considering Mr. Carey's politics, is greatly to his honour, and has almost wiped from my memory, that contumelious "*my lad.*"

From Mr. Carey I went to Mr. Bradford, and left the pamphlet for his perusal. The next day I went to him to know his determination. He hesitated, wanted to know if I could make it a little *more popular*, adding, that unless I could, he feared that the publishing of it would endanger *his windows*. *More popular*, I could not make it. I never was of an accommodating disposition in my life. The only alteration I would consent to, was in the title. I had given the pamphlet the double title

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of "*The Tartuffe Detected*; or, *Observations*, &c." The former was suppressed, though, had I not been pretty certain that every press in the city was as little free, as that to which I was sending it, the *Tartuffe Detected* should have remained; for the person on whom it was bestowed, merited it much better than the character so named from Molière.

These difficulties, and these fears of the bookseller, at once opened my eyes with respect to the boasted liberty of the press. Because the laws of this country proclaim to the world, that every man may write and publish freely; and because I saw the newspapers filled with vaunts on the subject, I was fool enough to imagine, that the press was really free for every one. I had not the least idea that a man's windows were in danger of being broken if he published any thing that was *not popular*. I did, indeed, see the words *liberty* and *equality*, the *rights of man*, the *crimes of kings*, and such like, in most of the booksellers' windows; but I did not know that they were put there to save the glass, as a free republican Frenchman puts a cockade tri-

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color in his hat, to save his head. I was ignorant of all these *arcana* of the liberty of the press.

If it had so happened, that one of the Whiskey Boys had went over to England, and had received addresses from any part of the people there, congratulating him on his escape from a nation of ruffians, and beseeching the Lord, that those ruffians might tread back the paths of *infamy* and *ruin*;" and if this emigrating "*Martyr*," in the cause of Whiskey, had echoed back the hypocritical cant; and if he and all his palavering addressers had been detected and exposed by some good American in London, would not such an American have received the applause of all men of virtue and sense? And what would, or rather, what would not have been said here against the prostituted press of Great Britain, had an English bookseller testified his fears to publish the truth, lest his windows should be dashed in?

The work that it was feared would draw down punishment on the publisher, did not contain one untruth, one anarchical, indecent, immoral, or irreligious expres-

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sion; and yet the bookseller feared for his windows! For what? Because it was not *popular enough*. A bookseller in a *despotic* state fears to publish a work that is *too popular*; and one in a *free* state, fears to publish a work that is not *popular enough*. I leave it to the learned philosophers of the "Age of Reason," to determine in which of these states there is the most liberty of the press; for, I must acknowledge, the point is too nice for me; fear is fear, whether inspired by a Sovereign Lord the King, or by a Sovereign People.

I shall be told, that Mr. Bradford's fears were groundless. It may be so; but he ought to be a competent judge of the matter; he must know the extent of the liberty of the press better than I could. He might be mistaken; but that he was sincere, appeared clearly from his not putting his name at the bottom of the title page. Even the *Bone to gnaw for the Democrats*, which did not appear till about six months afterwards, was "published for the purchasers." It was not until long after the public had fixed the seal of approbation on these pamphlets, that they were honoured

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with the bookseller's name. It was something curious, that the second, and third and fourth editions should be entitled to a mark of respect that the first was not worthy of. Poor little innocents! They were thrown on the parish like foundlings; no soul would own them till it was found that they possessed the gift of bringing in the pence. Another singularity is, that they got into better paper as they advanced. So the prudent matron changes the little dirty ragged wench into a fine mademoiselle, as soon as she perceives that the beaux begin to cast their eyes upon her.

But it is time to return, and give the reader an account of my gains. The pecuniary concerns of an author are always the most interesting.

The terms on which Mr. Bradford took the *Observations*, were what booksellers call *publishing it together*. I beg the reader, if he foresees the possibility of his becoming author, to recollect this phrase well. *Publishing it together*, is thus managed: the bookseller takes the work, prints it, and defrays all expences of paper, binding, &c. and the profits, if any, are divided be-

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tween him and the author.—Long after the *Observations* were sold off, Mr. Bradford rendered me an account (undoubtedly a very just one) of the sales. According to this account my share of the profits (my share only) amounted to the sum of *one shilling and seven-pence halfpenny*, currency of the state of Pennsylvania (or, about eleven pence three farthings sterling), quite entirely clear of all deductions whatsoever!

Now, bulky as this sum appears in words at length, I presume, that when 1*s.* 7½*d.* is reduced to figures, no one will suppose it sufficient to put a coat upon my back. If my poor back were not too broad to be clothed with such a sum as this, God knows how I should bear all that has been, and is, and is to be, laid on it by the unmerciful democrats. Why! 1*s.* 7½*d.* would not cover the back of a Lilliputian! no, not even in rags, as they sell here

Besides, this clothing story will at once fall to the ground, when I assure the reader (and Mr. Carey will bear witness to the truth of what I say), that, when I offered this work for publication, I had as

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good a coat upon my back, as ever Mr. Bradford, or any of his brother booksellers, put on in their lives; and, what is more, this coat was my own. No tailor nor shoemaker ever had my name in his books.

After the *Observations*, Mr. Bradford and I *published it together* no longer. When a pamphlet was ready for the press, we made a bargain for it, and I took his note of hand, payable in one, two, or three months. That the public may know exactly what gains I have derived from the publications that issued from Mr. Bradford's, I here subjoin a list of them; and the sums received in payment.

	Dols.	*Cents.*
Observations, ...	0	21
Bone to Gnaw, 1st Part, ...	125	0
Kick for a Bite, ...	20	0
Bone to Gnaw, 2d Part, ...	40	0
Plain English, ...	100	0
New Year's Gift, ...	100	0
Prospect, ...	18	0
Total, ...	403	21

The best way of giving the reader an idea of the generosity of my bookseller is,

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to tell him, that upon my going into business for myself, I offered to purchase the copy-rights of these pamphlets at the same price that I had sold them at. Mr. Bradford's refusing to sell, is a clear proof that they were worth more than he gave me, even after they had passed through several editions. Let it not be said, then, that he put a coat upon my back.

My concerns with Mr. Bradford, closed with *The Prospect from the Congress Gallery*, and, as our separation has given rise to conjectures and reports, I shall trouble the reader with an explanation of the matter.

I proposed making a mere collection of the debates, with here and there a note, by way of remarks. It was not my intention to publish it in Numbers, but at the end of the session, in one volume; but Mr. Bradford, fearing a want of success in this form, determined on publishing in Numbers. This was without my approbation, as was also a subscription that was opened for the support of the work. When about half a Number was finished, I was informed that many gentlemen had expressed their desire that the work might contain a

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good deal of original matter, and few debates. In consequence of this, I was requested to alter my plan; I said I would, but that I would by no means undertake to continue the work.

The first Number, as it was called (but not by me), was published, and its success led Mr. Bradford to press for a continuation. His son offered me, I believe, a hundred dollars a Number, in place of eighteen; and I should have accepted his offer, had it not been for a word that escaped him during the conversation. He observed, that their customers would be much disappointed; for that his *father had promised* a continuation, and *that it should be made very interesting*. This slip of the tongue opened my eyes at once. What! a bookseller undertake to promise that I should write, and that I should write to please his customers too! No; if all his *customers*, if all the Congress, with the President at their head, had come and solicited me; nay, had my life depended on a compliance, I would not have written another line.

I was fully employed at this time, hav-

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ing a translation on my hands for Mr. Moreau de St. Mery, as well as another work which took up a great deal of my time; so that, I believe, I should not have published the *Censor*, had it not been to convince the *customers* of Mr. Bradford that I was not in his pay; that I was not the puppet, and he the showman. That, whatever merits or demerits my writings might have, no part of them fell to his share.

When Mr. Bradford found I was preparing to publish a continuation of the remarks on the debates, he sent me the following note:

"SIR,

"Send me your account, and a receipt for the last publication, and your money shall be sent you by

"Yours, &c.

"THO. BRADFORD.

"*Philadelphia, April* 22, 1796."

To this I returned, for answer:

"*Philadelphia, 22d March, 1796.*

"SIR,

"I have the honour to possess your laconic note; but upon my word, I do not understand it. The requesting

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of a receipt from a person, before any tender of money is made, and the note being dated in April, in place of March; these things throw such an obscurity over the whole, that I defer complying with its contents, till I have the pleasure of seeing yourself.

"I am,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"WM. COBBETT."

This brought me a second note, in these words:

"SIR,

"Finding you mean to pursue the *Prospect*, which you sold to me, I now make a demand of the *fulfillment* of your contract, and if honour does not prompt you to *fulfill* your engagements, you may rely on an *applycatiot* to the laws of my country, and make no doubt, I shall there meet you on such grounds as will convince you I am not to be trifled with.

"I am

"Yours, &c.

"THO. BRADFORD.

"*March* 22, 1796."

Here ended the correspondence, except that it might be said to be continued for about five minutes longer, by the hearty laugh that I bestowed on this *correct* and polite billet.

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It is something truly singular, that Mr. Bradford should threaten me with a prosecution for not writing, just at the moment that others threatened me with a prosecution for writing. It seemed a little difficult to set both at open defiance, yet this was done, by continuing to write, and by employing another bookseller.

Indeed, these booksellers in general are a cruel race. They imagine that the soul and body of every author that falls into their hands, is their exclusive property. They have adopted the bird-catcher's maxim; "A bird that can sing, and won't sing, ought to be made sing." Whenever their devils are out of employment, the drudging goblin of an author must sharpen up his pen, and never think of repose, till he is relieved by the arrival of a more profitable job. Then the wretch may remain as undisturbed as a sleep-mouse in winter, while the stupid dolt whom he has clad and fattened, receives the applause.

I now come to the assertion, that I am, or have been, in the pay of the British Government.

In the first place, the democrats swear,

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that I have been "frequently visited by a certain Agent," meaning, I suppose, Mr. Bond; to this I answer that it is an abominable lie. I never saw Mr. Bond but three times in my life, and then I had business with him, as the interpreter of Frenchmen, who wanted certificates from him, in order to secure their property in the conquered colonies. I never in my life spoke to, corresponded with, or even saw, to my knowledge, either of the British Ministers, or any one of their retinue. Mr. Bradford once told me, that Mr. Allen, the father-in-law of Mr. Hammond, said he was acquainted with me. If this gentleman did really say so, he joked; for he never saw me in his life, that I know of.

A little while after the New Year's Gift was published, an attack was made in the *Argus* of New York, on the supposed author of it; in consequence of which, this supposed author, or some one in his behalf, took occasion to observe in Mr. Claypoole's paper, that it was uncandid to attribute to a gentleman of irreproachable character, what was well known to

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be the work of a democrat. I had a great mind to say, at that time, what I shall now say; and that is, that let this gentleman be who he will, I think myself as good as he, and of as good a character too; and that, as to the dishonour attached to the publication, I am willing to take it all to myself.

It is hard to prove a negative; it is what no man is expected to do; yet, I think I can prove, that the accusation of my being in British pay, is not supported by one single fact, or the least shadow of probability.

When a foreign government hires a writer, it takes care that his labours shall be distributed, whether the readers are all willing to pay for them or not. This we daily see verified in the distribution of certain blasphemous gazettes, which, though kicked from the door with disdain, flies in at the window. Now, has this ever been the case with the works of William Cobbett? Were they ever thrusted upon people in spite of their remonstrances? Can Mr. Bradford say, that thousands of these pamphlets have ever been paid for by any

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Agent of Great Britain? Can he say, that I have ever distributed any of them? No; he can say no such thing. They had, at first, to encounter every difficulty, and they have made their way, supported by public approbation, and by that alone. Mr. Bradford, if he is candid enough to repeat what he told me, will say, that the British Consul, when he purchased half a dozen of them, insisted upon having them *at the wholesale price!* Did this look like a desire to encourage them? Besides, those who know any thing of Mr. Bradford, will never believe that he would have lent his aid to a British Agent's publications; for, of all the Americans I have yet conversed with, he seems to entertain the greatest degree of rancour against that nation.

I have every reason to believe, that the British Consul was far from approving of some, at least, of my publications. I happened to be in a bookseller's shop, unseen by him, when he had the goodness to say, that I was a "*wild fellow.*" On which I shall only observe, that when the King bestows on me about five hundred pounds

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sterling a year, perhaps I may become a *tame fellow*, and hear my master, my countrymen, my friends, and my parents, belied and execrated, without saying one single word in their defence.

Had the Minister of Great Britain employed me to write, can it be supposed that he would not furnish me with the means of living well, without becoming the retailer of my own works? Can it be supposed, that he would have suffered me ever to appear on the scene? It must be a very poor King that he serves, if he could not afford me more than I can get by keeping a book-shop. An ambassador from a king of the gipsies, could not have acted a meaner part. What! where was all the "gold of Pitt?" That gold which tempted, according to the democrats, an American Envoy to sell his country, and two-thirds of the Senate to ratify the bargain: that gold which, according to the Convention of France, has made one half of that nation cut the throats of the other half; that potent gold could not keep William Cobbett from standing behind a counter to sell a pen-knife, or a quire of paper!

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Must it not be evident, too, that the keeping of a shop would take up a great part of my time? Time that was hardly worth a paying for at all, if it was not of higher value than the profits on a few pamphlets. Every one knows that the Censor has been delayed, on account of my entering on business; would the Minister of Great Britain have suffered this, had I been in his pay? No; I repeat, that it is downright stupidity to suppose, that he would ever have suffered me to appear at all, had he even felt in the least interested in the fate of my works, or the effect they might produce. He must be sensible, that, seeing the unconquerable prejudices existing in this country, my being known to be an Englishman, would operate weightily against whatever I might advance. I saw this very plainly myself; but, as I had a living to get, and as I had determined on this line of business, such a consideration was not to awe me into idleness, or make me forego any other advantages that I had reason to hope I should enjoy.

The notion of my being in British pay, arose from my having now and then

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taken upon me to attempt a defence of the character of that nation, and of the intentions of its government towards the United States. But, have I ever teazed my readers with this, except when the subject necessarily demanded it? And if I have given way to my indignation when a hypocritical political divine attempted to degrade my country, or when its vile calumniators called it an "insular Bastile," what have I done more than every good man in my place would have done? what have I done more than my duty—than obeyed the feelings of my heart? When a man hears his country reviled, does it require that he should be paid for speaking in its defence?

Besides, had my works been intended to introduce British influence, they would have assumed a more conciliating tone. The author would have flattered the people of this country even in their excesses; he would have endeavoured to gain over the enemies of Britain by smooth and soothing language; he would have "stooped to conquer;" he would not, as I have done, ren-

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dered them hatred for hatred, and scorn for scorn.

My writings, the first pamphlet excepted, have had no other object than that of keeping alive an attachment to the constitution of the United States, and the inestimable man who is at the head of the government, and to paint in their true colours those who are the enemies of both; to warn the people of all ranks and descriptions, of the danger of admitting among them the anarchical and blasphemous principles of the French revolutionists; principles as opposite to those of liberty as hell is to heaven. If, therefore, I have written at the instance of a British agent, that agent must most certainly deserve the thanks of all the real friends of America. But, say some of the half democrats, what right have you to meddle with the defence of our government at all? —The same right that you have to exact my obedience to it, and my contribution towards its support. Several Englishmen, not so long in the country as I had been, served in the militia against the western

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rebels, and had I been called on I must have served too. Surely a man has a right to defend with his pen, that which he may be compelled to defend with a musquet.

As to the real, bloody, cut-throats, they carry their notion of excluding me from the use of the press still further. "While," says one of them, "while I am a friend to the *unlimited* freedom of the press, when exercised by *an American*, I am an implacable foe to its prostitution to a *foreigner*, and would at any time assist in hunting out of society any meddling foreigner who should dare to interfere in our politics. I hope the apathy of our *brethren* of Philadelphia will no longer be indulged, and that an exemplary *vengeance* will soon burst upon the head of such a presumptuous fellow.—*Justice, honour*, national *gratitude*, all call for it.—May it no longer be delayed.

"*An American.*"

Are not you, Mr. Swanwick, the President of the Emigration Society? Well then, Sir, as your institution is said to be for the information of persons emigrating from foreign countries, be so good as to in-

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sert the little extract above quoted, in your next dispatches for a cargo of Emigrants. Above all, Sir, be sure to tell those who are disposed to emigrate from England, those martyrs in the cause of liberty; be sure to tell them that this is the land of *equal* liberty; that here, and here alone, they will find the true, unlimited freedom of the press, but that, if they dare to make use of it, "*justice*, *honour*, national *gratitude*, will call for exemplary *vengeance* on their heads."

I should not have noticed this distinction between *Foreigners* and *Americans*, had I not perceived that several persons, who are, generally speaking, friends to their country, seem to think that it was impertinent in me to meddle with the politics here, because I was an Englishman. I would have these good people to recollect, that the laws of this country hold out to foreigners an offer of all that liberty of the press which Americans enjoy, and that if this liberty be abridged, by whatever means it may be done, the laws and the constitution, and all together, is a mere cheat; a snare to catch the credulous and

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enthusiastic of every other nation; a downright imposition on the world. If people who emigrate hither have not a right to make use of the liberty of the press, while the natives have, it is very ill done to call this a country of *equal* liberty. *Equal*, above all epithets, is the most improper that can be applied to it; for, if none but Americans have access to the press, they are their masters, and foreigners are their subjects, nay their slaves. An honourable and comfortable situation, upon my word! The emigrants from some countries may be content with it, perhaps: I would not say, that the "Martyrs in the cause of liberty" from England, would not quietly bend beneath the yoke, as, indeed, they are in duty bound to do; but, for my part, who have not the ambition to aspire to the crown of martyrdom, I must and I will be excused. Either the laws shall be altered, or I will continue to avail myself of the liberty that they held out to me, and that partly tempted me to the country. When an act is passed for excluding Englishmen from exercising their talents, and from promulgating what they

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write, then will I desist; but, I hope, when that time arrives, no act will be passed to prevent people from emigrating back again.

Before I conclude, it seems necessary to say a word or two about the miserable shift which the democrats have had recourse to, respecting the infamous letter of *Citizen Hint*. They now pretend, that I fabricated it myself, though I have publicly declared, that it was delivered into my hands by a gentleman of reputation, whose name I have mentioned. Can any one be stupid enough to imagine, that I would, particularly at this time, have run the risk of being detected in such a shameful business? And, how could it have been undertaken without running that risk? Had I written it myself, there would have been my hand-writing against me, and had I employed another, that other might have betrayed me; he might have ruined me in the opinion of all those, whom it is my interest as well as my pride to be esteemed by; or, at best, I should have been at his mercy for ever afterwards.

Besides the great risk of detection, let

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any one point out, if he can, what end I could propose to myself by such a device. As to making my shop and myself known, I presume I did not stand in need of a scare-crow to effect that, when the kind democrats themselves had published to the whole Union, that I had taken the house in which I live, for the purpose of retailing my "poison," as they called it, and had even had the candour to tell the world, that I had paid my rent in advance.

Thus far has Mr. Cobbet written his own Life; and as we do not consider ourselves as justified in adding any thing to this inimitable biography, we conceive it our duty to terminate it here.

THE END.

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